(c) whether Government would assist them in exporting the huge stock of chillies lying for exports by opening a regional office of Spices Board in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Spices Board jointly with the Horticulture Deptt. of Govt. of Andhra Pradesh and Regional Agriculture Research Institute (RARS), "LAM, Guntur" proposes to conduct training programmes in the districts of Guntur, Khammam, Prakasam, Warrangal and karimnagar for creation of awareness amongst the chilly growers on quality management and post-harvest handling of chillies with emphasis on need based application of pesticides.

(c) Yes Sir. The Spices Board proposes to open an office in Guntur for assisting the growers specially in the areas of quality management and post-harvest handling of storage of chillies for exports.

Tobacco exports to Russia and CIS Countries

912. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to increase tobacco exports to Russia and CIS countries in 1996-97;

(b) if so, whether any preliminary negotiations have been completed; and

(c) the steps proposed to improve tobacco exports to Russia and CIS countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) Under a bilateral perspective plan agreement, the Russian Government allocates rupee repayment funds to facilitate import of Tobacco upto 20,000 metric tonnes from India each year. The perspective Plan is at present operational for the period 1995-97.

Some of the steps taken/being taken for increasing tobacco exports to Russia and CIS States are:—

(i) Exploring possibilities of entering into long-term supply contracts with the tobacco processing plants in Russia.

(ii) persuading Russian authorities through bilateral discussions to fully utilise the funds allocated under the rupee repayment funds for the purchase of tobacco from India.

(iii) Facilitating contacts between importers from Russia and other CIS countries with Indian tobacco manufacturers and exporters through visits of trade delegations.

(iv) Permitting stock and sales of tobacco in CIS countries and exports on consignment basis against payment in freely convertible currencies.

(v) Encouraging the Indian exporters to set up offices in CIS countries.

Foreign exchange earned from export of tobacco products

913. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the foreign exchange earned from the export of different tobacco products in 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) the break-up of export of tobacco products, giving details;

(c) whether any item is showing an upward trend in exports in 1996-97; and

(d) details of such tobacco products which show upward trends in exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) The quantity of tobacco products exported and foreign exchange earned during 1995-96 and 1996-97 (April-Dec.) vis-a-vis 1995-96 (April-Dec.) are as follows:—

(Quantity:Tons; Value: Rs. Crs.)

Product	1995-96		1996-97 (Apr.-Dec.)		1995-96 (Apr.-Dec.)	
	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value
Cigarettes	884	13.93	329	7.34	778	12.13
Bidis	676	11.52	419	9.72	269	5.06
Hookah Tobacco Paste	9376	26.12	6506	20.91	6196	17.37
Chewing Tobacco/ Zarda	424	6.07	272	12.87	274	3.73
Cut Tobacco	512	1.78	11	0.10	512	1.77
Snuff	6	0.08	6	0.10	-	-
Others	5	0.18	2	0.03	4	0.14
Total	11883	59.68	7545	51.07	8033	40.20

(Source : Tobacco Board)

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Bidis, Hookah Tobacco Paste and Snuff have shown a marginal increase in quantity and value terms in April-December, 1996 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

Production of Flue Cured Virginia Tobacco

914. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total production of Flue Cured Virginia Tobacco during 1995-96 and 1996-97 in the country, State-wise;

(b) the financial assistance provided by the Tobacco Board to each State to boost the production of tobacco during the above period;

(c) whether tobacco growers of several States have demanded remunerative price for their produces;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) The total production of Flue Cured Virginia Tobacco during 1995-96 [illegible] 1996-97 in [illegible] are:—

Production in M.K. gs. (Green Wt.)

State	1995-96	1996-97 (Estimated)
Andhra Pradesh	101.66	132.10 (Approx.)
Maharashtra	0.21	0.20
Orissa	0.13	0.20
Karnataka	25.00	36.00

(b) Tobacco Board has been implementing various developmental and extension Schemes for increasing the yield and quality of FCV tobacco grown in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka where FCV tobacco is mainly grown. Under these schemes financial assistance in the shape of subsidy is being given to the FCV tobacco growers. The expenditure on these schemes for Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have been Rs. 40.89 lakh and Rs. 17.41 lakhs respectively in 1995-96, and Rs. 45.03 lakhs and Rs. 28.32 lakhs respectively in 1996-97.

(c) and (e) Representations have been received from tobacco growers of Karnataka from time to time on various issues which includes demand for remunerative prices. The 1996-97 auctions held in Karnataka shows a favourable price received by farmers of tobacco.